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SUBJECT: UNSC: IGAD DELEGATION SHOWS CRACKS IN PUSH FOR
ERITREA SANCTIONS

REF: ADDIS ABABA 1237

Classified By: Amb. Susan Rice, for reasons 1.4 b/d.

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: A delegation from the Inter Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) met with Amb. Rice on June 10 to press for UNSC implementation of sanctions against Eritrea as called for by recent communiqués of IGAD and the African Union (AU). The delegation, led by Ethiopian State Minister Tekeda Alemu and Somali Foreign Minister Mohammed Omaar, agreed that action needed to be taken against Eritrea. Omaar told Amb. Rice that IGAD was only asking for a relatively minor sanctions regime, a travel ban, and asset freeze to give a political signal from the Council as a warning to Eritrea, while Tekeda said that the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) could imminently collapse if the Council did not act more forcefully. Rice told the group that the U.S. was still evaluating the IGAD proposal, and advised them to present a united African front to the Council. End summary.

¶2. (C) On June 10 Amb. Rice hosted a meeting with a delegation of IGAD leaders, including Somali FM Omaar, Ethiopian State Minister Tekeda, Djiboutian Ambassador Roble Olhaye and the IGAD facilitator for Somalia, Kipruto Arap Kirwa. FM Omaar opened the meeting by asking the U.S. to support the IGAD and AU Peace and Security Council initiative to sanction Eritrea, but did not specify what sanctions IGAD envisioned beyond general mention of a travel ban and asset freeze against unspecified individuals. Omaar said that the UNSC needed to give an "indicative sign" that it was serious about enforcing the arms embargo it had imposed on Somalia, and that he believed even skeptical UNSC delegations such as Libya would be willing to quietly go along with the proposal.

¶3. (C) Tekeda made a case for more forceful sanctions, claiming that the TFG faced imminent collapse, and implying that only Ethiopian assistance had helped it survive thus far. (NOTE: While Omaar was titular head of the IGAD delegation, Tekeda paid him little deference. End note.) In Ethiopia's view, Tekeda said, "we don't have much time" to enact sanctions against Eritrea, adding "we want to see results within a week."

¶4. (C) Amb. Rice advised the group to reach agreement on a specific package of measures and counseled that the initiative would be more viable in the Council, if packaged as an African consensus proposal rather than one driven by Eritrea's estranged neighbors Ethiopia and Djibouti. Moreover, she cautioned that the group should have rational expectations of the utility of sanctions. For example, an asset freeze or travel ban on Eritrean leaders might increase pressure over the long run, but was unlikely to quickly change the situation on the ground in Somalia. Rice also urged the group to draw a link to the situation in Djibouti when drawing up its proposal to sanction Eritrea. To punish Eritrea for its activities in Somalia while ignoring Djibouti

would send an inadvertent signal that Eritrea could continue to invade its neighbors with impunity, she said. Washington would continue its review of Horn of Africa policy, Rice said, adding that the U.S. would want to carefully consider the possibility of dialogue with Eritrea before making a final decision on a sanctions proposal.

15. (C) Tekeda said that his capital had hoped the U.S. would take the lead on the IGAD initiative in the Council and that he feared Washington would "drag its feet" on sanctions. Amb. Rice replied that the U.S. had no problem being tough, but that it was important for the Council to make sure "we have real bullets in the gun if we fire." Omaar committed to further IGAD deliberations with a view to circulating a consensus draft resolution text for USG review by the morning of June 11.

RICE